

INDEXA



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A non-profit organization for the enhancement of amateur radio, worldwide peace, and friendship
Daily Information Session—14.236 @ 23:30Z

3B9R—Rodrigues Island

Rodrigues Island, the “Cinderella of the Mascarenes,” captured the imagination of the 3B9R team while operating two years earlier at Kure as K7K. “Let us tell you where to go next,” the Kure operators were being told, especially by Japanese operators. “We need you to go to Rodrigues, 3B9.”

Advance planning

Hardly had the Kure team returned home when exploratory discussions began with representatives of the Republic of Mauritius. In spite of initial endorsements for the project, the government advised the Midway-Kure DX Foundation to be patient in obtaining necessary permission. The definition of patience in this case meant approximately 1 1/2 years before permission and the 3B9R license would be granted.

Then the project was delayed and postponed several times in order to time the DXpedition to avoid the island’s annual cyclone season. So



The 3B9R Rodrigues Island DXpedition team. Front: Frank, AH0W; Garry, NI6T. Back: Bruce, W6OSP; Jari, OH2BU; Robert, 3B9FR; Yuuji, JA3IG; Jacky, 3B8CF; Victor, XE1VIC; Ned, AA7A; and Kimo, KH7U.

in late March 1999, the team members, Frank Smith, AH0W/OH2LVG (team leader); Kimo Chun, KH7U; Bruce Butler, W6OSP; Ned Stearns, AA7A; Jari Jussila, OH2BU; Victor Keller, XE1VIC; Garry Shapiro, NI6T; and Yuuji Yoshitani, JA3IG/K1NT; left their various homelands en route to the Republic of Mauritius where they would be joined by Jacky Mandary, 3B8CF, all bound

for the neighboring island of Rodrigues for the first team-DXpedition to 3B9 in years.

Customs negotiations

Things didn’t turn out as simple as originally planned. Just prior to departure, Mauritian customs authorities notified the group that there was

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good news and bad news. The several dozen containers of amateur gear had arrived in good order; however, there would be a modest sum of approximately \$43,000 to be paid before they could be released, this in spite of earlier assurances that the goods would flow customs-free.

Given the lateness of the situation, the only choice was to cancel the DXpedition or go ahead and utilize best negotiating skills to find a less costly resolution while in Mauritius itself. Frank, AH0W; Jari, OH2BU; Bruce, W6OSP; and Garry, NI6T; were the first to arrive in Mauritius. They immediately commenced negotiations with the friendly authorities in Mauritius and the results couldn't have been better. The customs bill was reduced to zero, much to the astonishment of the freight handlers who were ordered to immediately release the goods for forward shipment to Rodrigues.

Unfortunately, this all happened one day too late. The goods were not released in time for an anticipated ship departure to Rodrigues. Instead, during the next several days the DXpedition gear was piece-mealed to Rodrigues on small passenger aircraft. Ultimately, all but one antenna made the trip, still leaving the team with enough gear to set up at least six HF stations, one 6 meter station and an array of antennas that included products by Titanex, Force-12, Nagara (Japan), and Cushcraft. Other gear included several Yaesu FT-1000MP's and Alpha 91B's.

Idyllic surroundings

Upon arrival, the team found an emerald green island surrounded by a turquoise-blue lagoon, larger than the island itself. At the center of the island is Mount Lubin, itself a veritable forest of eucalyptus and pine trees. Elsewhere are the typical coconut palms and small cornfields that dot the landscapes. Dogs, cows, and sheep roam freely about. The island's 35,000 French-Creole speaking residents couldn't have been friendlier and more helpful to the team.

Maximizing operations

"Camp" was set up at three separate resort hotels on Rodrigues, located at Port Mathurin, Cotton Bay, and Sud-Est. This distant layout enabled the team to maximize propagation openings by operating dual-mode per band without interference from other stations. Each station was located approximately 5-7 miles from each other; however, travel between stations was long and arduous due to the hills and mountains between QTHs.

Publicity

The island's only link to the outside world is its local AM music and news station which undertook to broadcast daily updates about the visiting amateur radio operators to its Rodriguan audience. The updates included daily QSO tallies. Journalists, also from Mauritius, sought out the team and ran a print feature story about the DXpedition. Soon the residents of the island knew the team members by name.

Trouble brewing

About mid-stream into the DXpedition two events occurred. The team's goal of 40,000 QSOs was surpassed. The other event was a cyclone that threatened to shut down the DXpedition for at least two days. The team was advised to take down the highest antennas and wait for further instructions. In the meantime, the storm was approaching at a speed of 90-100 km per hour. The team decided that if the island's 5,000 small fishing boats were to be taken ashore, then the rest of the antennas would come down also. As it turned out, just an hour before the expected arrival of the storm, the cyclone suddenly changed course and 3B9R remained on the air with all antennas. Life on Rodrigues and 5,000 fishing boats returned to their normal serenity.

The following evening, the Port Mathurin team was visited by some local Rodriguans who thanked the team for bringing amateur radio back to their island. They explained that the

frequent cyclones leave them without communications of any kind at times when help is needed the most. Amateur radio would now give them an added measure of security during difficult times.

Welcome back, 3B9FR!

Part of the 3B9R "mission" was to put Robert Felicite, 3B9FR, back on the air after a 5-year hiatus brought about by a serious illness in his family and cyclones that devastated his station along with his precious QSL card collection. Indeed, Robert has been heard and worked almost daily since the departure of the 3B9R team, so amateur radio is back on Rodrigues Island.

Come see us again!

The team wrapped up operations on April 10th and after a brief meeting at Port Mathurin said farewell to each other and Rodrigues Island. A few days later, the CT logs were merged to reveal that the 3B9R QSO count far exceeded the original goal. The effort resulted in approximately 47,000 QSOs made from 6 to 160 meters, all modes.

Another nice thing happened after the team returned home. Authorities in Mauritius extended an invitation to the Midway-Kure DX Foundation for an encore DXpedition from Rodrigues Island.

MKDXF is currently working on four future DXpeditions.

Thanks for making 3B9R a reality

The team wishes to extend its thanks for the friendly support of many great sponsoring organizations and individuals, especially INDEXA and its worldwide membership.

Please QSL the 3B9R DXpedition via Joyce Johnson, N7LVD.

Status Report: 6O1Z and 6O0X—Somaliland

Franz, DJ9ZB, and Baldur, DJ6SI, recently operated as 6O1Z and 6O0X from Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland in East Africa.

Using an R-6000 vertical and an FT-900/AT Franz made 8,000 QSOs, SSB, 20-10 meters including WARC. Baldur made 8,000 QSOs on CW.

Somaliland

On 18 May 1991, Somaliland declared its independence from Somalia.

It adopted its own constitution and has its own flag.

It has a coat-of-arms, a national anthem, an elected national assembly and a head of state.

It issues currency, stamps, and passports.

Law is respected; peace prevails.

Does Somaliland count as a DXCC entity? No.



Franz Langner, 6O1Z, operating from Hargeisa in Somaliland.

missing criteria

Somaliland is not on the DXCC List and to qualify as a DXCC entity under the new rules, Somaliland must meet one of the following requirements:

- be a member of the UN
- have an ITU assigned callsign prefix block
- have an IARU member society

Somaliland has none of the above.

Retroactive credit?

Unfortunately, a card for 6O0X or 6O1Z will not count for DXCC, even if one of the criteria is met.

Contacts will only be effective on the date that Somaliland qualifies with one of the three requirements listed above.

QSLs

QSL 6O0X via DJ6SI and 6O1Z via DJ9ZB.

New Life Members.....

KU9C,	K4VNY,	W7CA,	KI7Y,	K4WA,
N6GB,	W1PCD,	N4PI,	W4TMM,	XE1RCS,
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Extra Help Provided By.....

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W5KFN,	KP3X,	N3NY,	W6SL,	W4PJI,
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and,	KB2XP			

Exercise your membership
privilege.
VOTE!

INDEXA Ballot 1999-2000

Please vote and return your ballot to the election officer no later than 30 September 1999.

Bill Jennings, W4UNP
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